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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:	Radtke et al.	Examiner:	Pillai, N.
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Title: Error and Tip Information Text Messaging

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8:

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By

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BRIEF ON APPEAL

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This is an appeal from the Office Action mailed on December 30, 2003 finally rejecting claims 1-12.

This Brief is being filed in triplicate. The fee required under 37 CFR §1.17(c) for the appeal should be charged to Deposit Account No. 13-2725. The Appellants request the opportunity for a personal appearance before the Board of Appeals to argue the issues of this appeal. The fee for the personal appearance will be timely paid upon receipt of the Examiner's Answer.

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REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Microsoft Corp. of Redmond, Washington.

RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

The assignee, the assignee's legal representatives, and the patent applicants submit that there are no related appeals or interferences that are directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this appeal.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-12 were rejected in a Final Office Action dated December 30, 2003. Each of the rejected claims 1-12 has been appealed. A clean copy of the pending claims is attached as an Appendix.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments were filed after the Final Office Action.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention are related to a method, system, and computer readable medium for providing error information and tip information by displaying both the error information and the tip information as static text or markers next to a data field into which the user is inputting text. In an embodiment of the present invention, when a user focuses on a first data field 304, a first data field tip 330 associated with the first data field 304 is displayed, as shown in FIG. 3a. Data is entered into the first data field 304 while continuing to display the first data field tip 330. The first data field tip 330 may include information about the rules of the first data field 304 or any errors with the data entered into the first data field 304. When the user focuses on a second data field 308, the first data field tip 330 is hidden from view, and a second data field tip 344 associated with the second data field 304 is displayed, as illustrated in FIG. 3b.

In an embodiment of the present invention, after the user enters data into a data field, such as the second data field 308, and focuses on another data field or activates a validation button 332, a determination is made whether the data entered into the second data field 308 is erroneous. If the data entered into the second data field is erroneous, an error marker 350 is placed adjacent to the second data field 308, as shown in FIG. 3c. In an embodiment of the present invention, after the error marker 350 is placed, the user may refocus on the second data field 308. In response to refocusing on the second data field 308, another data field tip 354 is displayed adjacent the second data field 308 to assist the user in correcting the data entered into the second data field 308, as shown in FIG. 3c.

ISSUES ON APPEAL

The following issues are on appeal:

- 1) Whether claims 1 and 7 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by U.S. Patent No. 4,899,276 to Stadler (hereinafter “Stadler”).
- 2) Whether claims 2-6 and 8-12 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Stadler in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,646,250 to Childress (hereinafter “Childress”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,736,984 to Jellinek et al. (hereinafter “Jellinek”).

GROUPING OF CLAIMS

For the purpose of this Appeal, rejected claims 1-12 do not stand and fall together. Rejected claims 1-12 are separately patentable for at least the reasons provided below in the “Arguments” section.

ARGUMENTS OF APPELLANTS

Rejections of Claims 1 and 7 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1 and 7 have been rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by U.S. Patent No. 4,899,276 to Stadler (hereinafter “Stadler”). Reversal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Appellants’ claimed invention, as embodied in independent claim 1, is directed to a method of displaying a static information tip. The method includes the following claim features:

- (1) providing a plurality of data fields, wherein the plurality of data fields comprises a first data field and a second data field;
- (2) focusing on the first data field;
- (3) in response to focusing on the first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field;
- (4) focusing on the second data field;
- (5) hiding from view the first static information tip; and
- (6) in response to focusing on the second data field, displaying a second static information tip proximate to the second data field;
- (7) whereby the first static information tip does not interrupt data input into the first data field and whereby the first information tip remains displayed until the step of focusing on the second data field.

The teaching of Stadler is directed to a field-directed screen help technique for a data entry system and program for implementing the same that responds to a user request for help by overwriting a portion of the data entry screen with explanatory text that relates to the field wherein the cursor is currently located. To invoke the explanatory text, Stadler teaches first placing the cursor in the field and then pressing a “help” key, such as the F1 key. After the “help” key is pressed, Stadler teaches that “help text” that corresponds to the field in which the cursor is located is called from memory and then displayed at a location that does not obscure the field. Stadler teaches that the “help text” provides an explanation that is specifically directed to the field in which the cursor is located.

In the Final Office Action (Paper 5), the Examiner asserts that Stadler teaches all of the elements of claim 1. In response to this rejection, the Appellants pointed out to the Examiner by

written response that Stadler does not teach a method of displaying a static information tip as recited by claim 1.¹ Specifically, the Appellants pointed out that unlike the method of claim 1 which recites displaying a static information tip proximate to a data field in response to focusing on the data field, Stadler teaches at column 3, lines 38-51 that a user must first position the cursor in a field which the user desires an explanation to be directed and then press the F1 or "help" key to display the "help text" directed to the field in which the cursor is located. Thus, Stadler teaches performing a first step of placing the cursor in a field and then a second step of pressing the F1 key to display a window providing an explanation directed to the field in which the cursor is located, in contrast to the method of claim 1, which recites performing one step of focusing on the data field to display a static information tip. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner states:

"Stadler discloses being in a first data field, thereby bringing focus to that first field, that being the current data field that the user is entering data onto and in response to focusing on the first field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field (column 2, lines 33-37)."

The Examiner has erred by referring to a concept not actually present in Stadler. In particular, Stadler fails to teach or suggest that in response to being in a first data field, which the Examiner defines as bringing focus to the first data field, a first static information tip is displayed proximate to the first data field. To the contrary, as discussed above, Stadler teaches that a user must first place the cursor in the field and then press the F1 key to display a "help text" corresponding to the field where the cursor is located. For at least these reasons, the Appellants assert that Stadler fails to teach or suggest a method of displaying a static information tip as recited by claim 1 and assert that the rejection of claim 1 should be overturned on this basis.

Additional claims of the present application are allowable over the rejection based on Stadler. Claims 2-5 depending from claim 1 are allowable for at least the reasons noted above. Note that claims 2-5 are discussed below in a separate section as claims 2-6 and 8-12 were separately rejected.

¹ The Appellants attempted to schedule a telephone interview with the Examiner to discuss the Final Office Action prior to submitting the written response. However, the telephone interview was not granted.

Furthermore, independent claim 7 is also allowable over the rejection based on Stadler. The Appellants' claimed invention, as embodied in independent claim 7, is directed to a computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform the following steps:

- (1) providing a plurality of data fields, wherein the plurality of data fields comprises a first data field and a second data field;
- (2) focusing on the first data field;
- (3) in response to focusing on the first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field;
- (4) focusing on the second data field;
- (5) hiding from view the first static information tip; and
- (6) in response to focusing on the second data field, displaying a second static information tip proximate to the second data field;
- (7) whereby the first static information tip does not interrupt data input into the first data field and whereby the first information tip remains displayed until the step of focusing on the second data field.

Claim 7 shares similar features with claim 1, which include in response to focusing on a first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field and in response to focusing on a second data field, displaying a second static information tip proximate to the second data field. As noted above in relation to claim 1, Stadler teaches performing a first step of placing the cursor in a field and then a second step of pressing the F1 key to display a window providing an explanation directed to the field in which the cursor is located, in contrast to the method of claim 1 and the computer readable medium of claim 7, which recite performing one step of focusing on the data field to display a static information tip. Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 7 based on Stadler should be overturned for at least this reason.

Additional claims of the present application are allowable over the rejection based on Stadler. Claims 8-11 depending from claim 7 are allowable for at least the reasons noted above. Note that claims 8-11 are discussed below in a separate section as claims 2-6 and 8-12 were separately rejected.

Rejections of Claims 2-6 and 8-12 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 2-6 and 8-12 have been rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Stadler in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,646,250 to Childress (hereinafter “Childress”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,736,984 to Jellinek et al. (hereinafter “Jellinek”). Reversal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5 are dependent upon claim 1 and are allowable over the rejection based on Stadler for at least the reasons given above with regard to claim 1. The Appellants respectfully submit that the combined teaching of Stadler, Childress, and Jellinek does not make obvious the Appellants’ claimed invention as embodied in claims 2-5 for at least these reasons. Accordingly, the Appellants assert that the rejection of claims 2-5 should be overturned on this basis.

The Appellants’ claimed invention, as embodied in independent claim 6, is directed to a method of displaying a static information tip and an error marker. The method includes the following claim features:

- (1) focusing on a first data field;
- (2) in response to focusing on the first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field;
- (3) entering data in the first data field while continuing to display the first static information tip;
- (4) focusing on a second data field;
- (5) hiding from view the first static information tip;
- (6) determining the data entered into the first data field is erroneous;
- (7) placing an error marker adjacent to the first data field;
- (8) refocusing on the first data field; and
- (9) displaying a second static information tip proximate to the first data field, the second static information tip containing information for correcting the data entered into the first data field.

A description of the teaching of Stadler may be relied upon from above.

Childress teaches a data entry screen that receives data entered by a user into a data entry field and checks the correctness of the data entered by a user into the data entry field when the ENTER key is pressed. If an error is detected in the entered data, then the data entry screen taught by Childress redisplay the incorrectly entered data with highlighting to indicate to the user that an error has been made in the data entry which must be corrected before information entered in the data entry screen will be accepted and processed.

The teaching of Jellinek is directed to a method and apparatus for processing user defined input including receiving input data from a user in a first graphical processing element and determining whether the input data received is valid when an apply button is selected, as illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 5. If the input data received is determined invalid, Jellinek teaches processing the error and displaying a feedback message that corresponds to specific errors and provides guidelines for resolving the errors in a second graphical processing element, as shown in FIGS. 4 and 7.

In the Final Office Action (paper 5), the Examiner asserts that Stadler teaches all of the elements of claim 6 except determining the data entered into the first data field is erroneous, placing an error marker adjacent to the first data field, and displaying a second static information tip proximate to the first data field, the second static information tip containing information for correcting the data entered into the first data field. The Appellants respectfully disagree. Specifically, the Appellants pointed out to the Examiner by written response that unlike the method of claim 6 which recites displaying a first static information tip proximate to a first data field in response to focusing on the first data field, Stadler teaches at column 3, lines 38-51 that a user must first position the cursor in a field which the user desires an explanation to be directed and then press the F1 or "help" key to display the "help text" directed to the field in which the cursor is located. For at least these reasons, the Appellants assert that Stadler fails to teach or suggest a method of displaying a static information tip as recited by claim 6.

The Examiner then combines Childress with Stadler and states that Childress does teach determining that the data entered into the first data field is erroneous and having means to place error markers adjacent to the first data field so that the combination allegedly cures some of the deficiencies of Stadler. The Appellants do not dispute that Childress teaches determining that data entered into a data entry field is erroneous and providing an indicator to illustrate to a user that an error has been made in the data entry. However, the Appellants pointed out to the

Examiner that like Stadler, Childress fails to teach or suggest displaying a first static information tip proximate to a data entry field in response to focusing on the data entry field. Instead, Childress teaches an interactive data entry system that checks the correctness of the data entered by a user into a data entry field in response to the ENTER key being pressed, and if an error is detected, then the system redisplay the incorrectly entered data with highlighting, without suggesting that the interactive data entry system provides a first information tip in response to focusing on the data entry field. Therefore, the Appellants assert that the combined teaching of Stadler and Childress fails to teach or suggest a method of displaying a static information tip as recited by claim 6.

The Examiner concedes in the Final Office Action that neither Stadler nor Childress teach displaying a second static information tip that contains information for correcting the data entered into the first data field proximate to the first data field. The Examiner then combines Stadler and Childress with Jellinek and states that Jellinek does teach providing tips that include means for correcting the errors detected proximate to the data field so that the combination allegedly cures the deficiencies of Stadler and Childress and renders the method of claim 6 unpatentable. The Appellants do not dispute that Jellinek teaches displaying a feedback message in a second graphical processing element that corresponds to specific errors in data input into a first graphical processing element and provides guidelines for resolving the errors. However, the Appellants pointed out to the Examiner that like Stadler and Childress, Jellinek fails to teach or suggest displaying a feedback message proximate to the first graphical processing element in response to focusing on the first graphical processing element as recited by claim 6. Instead, Jellinek teaches pressing an apply button to invoke the process to determine whether the input data received is valid, and if the data is invalid, then displaying the feedback message, without suggesting that the feedback message is displayed in response to focusing on the first graphical processing element. For at least these reasons, the Appellants assert that the combined teaching of Stadler, Childress, and Jellinek fails to teach or suggest a method of displaying a static information tip as recited by claim 6 and assert that the rejection of claim 6 should be overturned on this basis.

Claims 8-11 are dependent upon claim 7 and are allowable over the rejection based on Stadler for at least the reasons given above with regard to claim 7. The Appellants respectfully submit that the combined teaching of Stadler, Childress, and Jellinek does not make obvious the

Appellants' claimed invention as embodied in claims 8-11 for at least these reasons. Accordingly, the Appellants assert that the rejection of claims 8-11 should be overturned on this basis.

Independent claim 12 is also allowable over the rejection based on the combined teaching of Stadler, Childress, and Jellinek. The Appellants' claimed invention, as embodied in independent claim 12, is directed to a system for displaying a static information tip and an error marker. The system includes the following claim features:

- (1) a computer program module operative
 - (a) to focus on a first data field;
 - (b) to display a first static information tip proximate to the first data field in response to focusing on the first data field;
 - (c) to receive data in the first data field while continuing to display the first static information tip;
 - (d) to determine the data entered into the first data field is erroneous;
 - (e) to place an error marker adjacent to the first data field;
 - (f) to refocus on the first data field; and
 - (g) to display a second static information tip proximate to the first data field, the second static information tip containing information for correcting the data entered into the first data field.

Claim 12 shares similar features with claim 6, which include displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field in response to focusing on the first data field. As noted above in relation to claim 6, Stadler nor Childress nor Jellinek teaches displaying an information tip proximate to a data field in response to focusing on the data field. Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 12 based on the combined teaching of Stadler, Childress, and Jellinek should be overturned for at least this reason.

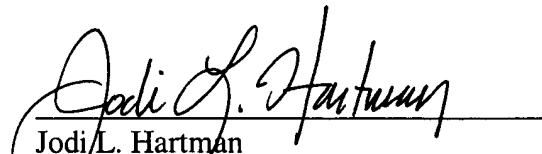
CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons given above, the Appellants respectfully submit that none of the references relied upon by the Examiner anticipate or make obvious the claimed invention embodied in the Appellants' claims 1-12. Accordingly, all of the above rejections to claims 1-12 should be reversed.

Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Merchant & Gould P.C.,
Deposit Account No. 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 28, 2004


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APPENDIX

1. A method of displaying a static information tip comprising the steps of:
 - providing a plurality of data fields, wherein the plurality of data fields comprises a first data field and a second data field;
 - focusing on the first data field;
 - in response to focusing on the first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field;
 - focusing on the second data field;
 - hiding from view the first static information tip; and
 - in response to focusing on the second data field, displaying a second static information tip proximate to the second data field;whereby the first static information tip does not interrupt data input into the first data field and whereby the first information tip remains displayed until the step of focusing on the second data field.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 - entering data in the first data field;
 - determining that the data entered in the first data field is erroneous;
 - focusing on the first data field; and
 - displaying a third static information tip proximate to the first data field,whereby the third static information tip does not interrupt corrective data input into the first data field.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of:
 - entering data in the second data field;
 - determining that the data entered in the second data field is erroneous;
 - focusing on the second data field; and
 - displaying a fourth static information tip proximate to the second data field,whereby the fourth static information tip does not interrupt corrective data input into the second data field.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:
displaying an error marker proximate to the first data field to indicate the data entered in the first data field is erroneous.

5. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:
displaying an error marker proximate to the first and second data fields to indicate the data entered in the first and second data fields is erroneous.

6. A method of displaying a static information tip and an error marker comprising the steps of:

 focusing on a first data field;
 in response to focusing on the first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field;
 entering data in the first data field while continuing to display the first static information tip;
 focusing on a second data field;
 hiding from view the first static information tip;
 determining the data entered into the first data field is erroneous;
 placing an error marker adjacent to the first data field;
 refocusing on the first data field; and
 displaying a second static information tip proximate to the first data field, the second static information tip containing information for correcting the data entered into the first data field.

7. A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform the steps of:

 providing a plurality of data fields, wherein the plurality of data fields comprises a first data field and a second data field;
 focusing on the first data field;
 in response to focusing on the first data field, displaying a first static information tip proximate to the first data field;

focusing on the second data field;
hiding from view the first static information tip; and
in response to focusing on the second data field, displaying a second static information tip proximate to the second data field;
whereby the first static information tip does not interrupt data input into the first data field and whereby the first information tip remains displayed until the step of focusing on the second data field.

8. The medium of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:
entering data in the first data field;
determining that the data entered in the first data field is erroneous;
focusing on the first data field; and
displaying a third static information tip proximate to the first data field,
whereby the third static information tip does not interrupt corrective data input into the first data field.

9. The medium of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:
entering data in the second data field;
determining that the data entered in the second data field is erroneous;
focusing on the second data field; and
displaying a fourth static information tip proximate to the second data field, whereby the fourth static information tip does not interrupt corrective data input into the second data field.

10. The medium of claim 8, further comprising the step of:
displaying an error marker proximate to the first data field to indicate the data entered in the first data field is erroneous.

11. The medium of claim 9, further comprising the step of:
displaying an error marker proximate to the first and second data fields to indicate the data entered in the first and second data fields is erroneous.

12. A system for displaying a static information tip and an error marker comprising a computer program module operative

- to focus on a first data field;

- to display a first static information tip proximate to the first data field in response to focusing on the first data field;

- to receive data in the first data field while continuing to display the first static information tip;

- to determine the data entered into the first data field is erroneous;

- to place an error marker adjacent to the first data field;

- to refocus on the first data field; and

- to display a second static information tip proximate to the first data field, the second static information tip containing information for correcting the data entered into the first data field.